

The shooting methods

Cinematography class 3

WHAT IS *CINEMATIC*?

- It's easy to think of filmmaking as not much more than "We'll put the actors on the set and roll the camera."

Visual Subtext and Visual Metaphor

- Many of these methods are all about adding *visual subtext* to your scenes. In addition to visual subtext, *visual metaphor* can be a powerful tool as well.

THE FRAME

- Setting the frame is a series of choices that decide what the viewer will see and not see. The first of these decisions is where to place the camera in relation to the scene. After that, there are choices concerning the field of vision and movement.

Static Frame

- A static frame is a proscenium. The action of the scene is presented as a stage show
- This is especially true if everything else about the frame is also normal — that is, level, normal lens, no movement, and so on.



CINEMA AS A LANGUAGE

The Shots: Building Blocks of a Scene

- If we think of a language of cinema, these shots are the *vocabulary*; how we edit them together would be the *syntax* of this language. These are the visual aspects of the language of film

Wide Shot

- If the script says “Wide shot — the English Countryside” we are clearly talking about a big panoramic scene done with a short focal length lens taking in all the eye can see.
- If the description is “Wide shot — Leo’s room” this is clearly a much smaller shot but it still encompasses all or most of the room.

Establishing Shots

- The establishing shot is usually a wide shot. It is the opening shot of a scene that tells us where we are.

Character Shots

- There are a number of terms for different shots of a single character.

Full Shot

- *Full shot* indicates that we see the character from head to toe. It can refer to objects as well .

Two Shot

- The *two shot* is any frame that includes two characters. The interaction between two characters in a scene is one of the most fundamental pieces of storytelling

Medium Shot

- The *medium shot*, like the wide shot, is relative to the subject. Obviously, it is closer than a full shot. Medium shots might be people at a table in a restaurant, or someone buying a soda, shown from the waist up.

Close-ups

- A *close-up* (CU) would generally be from the top of the head to somewhere just below the shirt pockets.

Extreme close-up or ECU

- An *extreme close-up* or *ECU* might include the eyes only
- Or anything that you want to show very nearly.

Over-the-Shoulder

- A variation of the close-up is the *over-the-shoulder* or *OTS*, looking

Cutaways

- A *cutaway* is any shot of some person or thing in the scene other than the main characters we are covering but that is still related to the scene.
- Examples would be a cutaway to a view out the window or to the cat sleeping on the floor. Cutaways may emphasize some action in the scene, provide additional information, or be something that the character looks at or points to.

Reaction Shots

- A specific type of close-up or medium is the *reaction shot*. Something happens or a character says something and we cut to another person *reacting* to what happened or what was said.

Inserts

- To be an insert instead of a cutaway, it has to be something we saw in the wider shots.
- Example: she is reading a book. We could just shoot the book over her shoulder, but it is usually hard to read from that distance.

Connecting Shots

- Most scenes involving two people can be adequately edited with *singles* of each person; whether are talking to each other or one is viewing the other from a distance, such as a shot of a sniper taking aim at someone.

Freeform Method

- Many scenes these days (and even entire movies) are shot in what is commonly called *documentary style*. Think of movies like *Cloverfield* or *The Hurt Locker*; the camera is handheld, loose, and the actor's movements don't seem preplanned.

Shooting the Freeform Method

- the actor who is speaking. This is the *dialog pass*.
who is *not* talking. This will give you lots of good *reaction shots*,
- which are important. It will also give the editor lots of things
- to cut away to. This is the *reaction pass*.
improvise: follow the dialog
- sometimes, go to the nonspeaking actor
sometimes, occasion- ally back up to get a wide shots — whatever seems appropriate. This is the *freeform pass*.

Montage

- A montage is simply a series of shots related by theme. Say the theme is “Springtime in the city” you might have a series of shots of the flowers blooming, gentle rain showers, the sun breaking through the clouds, that sort of thing.

The Fourth Wall

- **The fourth wall** is a performance convention in which an invisible, imagined **wall** separates actors from **the** audience. While **the** audience can see through this "**wall**", **the** convention assumes, **the** actors act as if they cannot.

Breaking the fourth wall

- This is when an actor in the play talks directly to the audience, it would break the illusion of the film.

Homework

- Choose your great scene from the film that you love and breaking the shot, why they shoot them like that?